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## Sketchings.

To those whom we now, for the first time, call "our brethren of the press," and whose cordial endorsements of the CRAYON, in advance of its appearance, has done much to establish the faith even of its friends, we return our hearty thanks. To us their words have been like the voice which fell from Alpine heights to the aspiring youth in Excelsior, and while we determine to fall in no wise behind their promises for us, we are reminded that we have entered into a company of those who, though powerful, are still generous and kindly to the weak. May we not fail, as we obtain the power of the press, to cultivate also its kindness and cheerfulness to those who pursue a coy ideal.

To the public we shall offer no apologies for imperfections, since we have never promised perfection, but only to do our best. We have been disappointed in our foreign correspondence, which does not come to hand as promptly as we hoped, but a few weeks at furthest will set it in good trim. Some valuable contributions, promised, also, have not been handed in as early as we hoped, but nobody but an editor can write at demand, and when they come they will be as welcome.

We are a little inclined to regret the want of walls in our American cities. Not that there is in us any warlike purpose, or any desire to lurk behind defences, but there is something in a wall which divides the city from the country, and while it shuts the man into the former, by a kind of stimulant to contrariness drives him out into the latter. Here city grows into country; we never know when we leave one or enter into the other. We remember with an exceeding delight the passage through the gloomy gateways of Vienna out on the "Wasser-glacis," with its trees and broad green stirring with soldiers and the idle part of the populace—the ditch in which poplars grew, and under whoseod, we were scarcely sorry for their own sakes, slept Blum and his confreres. There was no murder visible above ground, and the scene was no less attractive for what had been. One side of that gloomy gateway was the broad open green, the other the narrow gloomy streets with a stone plated earth—one side a prisoner, the other side we were spirit free.

Here we can only walk down to the dock, and look across the free water flowing in and out, amenable only to its own laws, indifferent as to restrictions by common council ordinances or city extensions. Its existence is secure, and if shut out here, it goes in there, or some other place, and flows ceaselessly, carelessly, for ever.

We can look across to Weehawken, or up to the Palisades, or over the green slopes of Staten Island, and feel that there is a country, but we must make a voyage to reach it. Then up the island a mingled forest of houses and trees—neither city or not city.

It is very well for business that we are thus hemmed in by rivers—a grand thing for commerce, and also not without its picturesqueness and beauty—even, on tranquil summer days; but for life—the true external life—give us a city in the mountains, walled into limits, and compelled from all too familiar advances towards the modest country. We know of but one such in this country, and of its sunny memories we may have something to say in our "Sketchings" of future times, when those wandering thoughts and dreams of pine forests and willow islands in the Mohawk take better form than they will now.

We give the following from a letter from J. B. Pyne, the English landscape painter, written from Macagno, Lago Maggiore, Italy, in August, "There is an immense deal of misconception formed by us English as to the climate of this

country. There is no caprice of weather in England which may not be said to be common to this, except that as regards heat in its summer, it cannot be borne even by the natives. At present it is a continual state of storms here; some of them have been very fine, destroying a good deal of property, mills, &c., and even human life. We have had three weeks of it with the exception of two days. The thunder has not been silent for a minute at a time for the last thirteen hours, and the flashes during last night were so incessant that you might have read print the whole time."

We have a remarkable character as servitor in our building—a negro rejoicing in the nomen and cognomen of John Proctor, a venerable grey-bearded son of Africa. John may have some objection to being thus, unwittingly to himself, dragged before the public, but he deserves a commemoration in THE CRAYON, for John is able to say, with the mighty Italian, *Anch' io sono pittore*. "John," said we, the other day, "some time when you and we are at leisure, we want to make a sketch of your head—some lazy afternoon—if we ever get one." "Oh, yes, sah," responded the delighted African, grinning until he showed the whole of his ivories toned down by age—and becoming instantly exceedingly communicative—"it give me great deal of pleasure, sah, to sit for my likeness, sah." Then, after a pause, "When I come up here, sah, I know dem picture, I see dem when I been in Misser Durand's room—dem very fine landscape, sah, I know dem right off, sah. In our painting, sah, when we paint down dere, we paint de landscape very small, only very little, not so big as dese, sah." "Ah," said we, judging that the "down dere" alluded to some part of his past life, "where did you use to live, John?" "Washington, District of Columbia, sah; I serve my time dere—paint chairs and such ting, sah. Yes, sah, I kin paint sign and ornamental painting, and I kin paint sign good as anybody—good as de next man, sah, in gilt and smalt, sah, yes, sah!" Here the old man advanced and laid his hand on the desk beside us, adding, "Only, sah, dey won't work long side o' me, 'cause I person of color. You ever hear of John Smith? he paint portrait, sah; go about and paint dem everywhere." Here the old man wandered again. "I kin make my size good as anybody, I don't care who 'tis—for gilding, sah, and oil-gilding, sah! One time you see all down one side Canal street J. Proctor, sah, on all de sign—I kin letter now—I won't give up to any man, on'y now, sah, de old man's hand unsteady with hard work. Hard work not good, sah, to make fine line. Den I grind de colors for de portrait makers, and such fine color, sah, no man grind for himself as I grind—butful, sah. Yes, sah, I got a stone to grind de color. I keep it just like piece of gold, sah, and I got brushes, and a palette board, and a knife, and I keep dem safe, sah. I say to de old woman dey don't eat nothing, and maybe some day de old man use dem again." And John worked slowly up into enthusiasm. The sketch recalled him, and he started on the other tack. "Yes, sah, I should like very much to have my portrait taken, and de old grey-beard just as it is, all grey, and my relations kin tell how de old man look when he's dead. Yes, sah, I very happy indeed, sah," and John moved off to see if the scuttle was full of coal, reiterating, "very happy to have my likeness drawed, sah."

## HABITS OF THE GLOW WORM.

I SAT painting one sunny afternoon in the forest, a prostrate beech tree serving in lieu of camp-stool, and the flies buzzing around me merrily, when I heard a buzz of unusual sharpness in the dry leaves at my feet, and looking carefully among them discovered an uncouth monster of an insect, who had grappled a fly,

and with his jaws gripped hard on the poor blue-bottle, was taking him in spite of himself into a nicely contrived hole among the rubbish. My first movement was to stop him and release the fly, not recognizing an old friend by daylight, but on stooping closer I saw the flashes of light from his lamp, and "knew the glow worm by his spark." I became at once an uninterested spectator, at least, so far as the result was concerned, and let them wriggle. The flashes of light were incessant while struggling, and seemed to be the consequence of excitement, for they ceased when the fly gave up his life and the effort to escape together. The glow worm slowly backed with his prey into his den, and then returned to the upper light, hiding behind a leaf all except his head and fore claws, and, perfectly motionless, waited until another unwary fly should come within his reach. Occasionally, as one approached, he moved out a little, with a quick, nervous motion, but not being able to reach him, retired to the covert again. Presently, a large black ant emerged from the den, bearing away the fly, and instantly the poor glow worm was in a panic. He dared not attack the ant, but hovered around to see what would be done—his light flashing terribly. After enjoying his distress a little while, with the end of my pencil I flirted the ant away, and the poor illuminator bore the body off in triumph.—*Letter of an Artist Friend.*

It is much to be regretted that there is no regular means for preventing pictorial piracy. Our laws protect books, but whether the law-makers think that artists can protect themselves or not, we do not know: yet so it is that pictures which have cost the artists much thought and labor, are immediately, on their becoming popular, copied in all grades of Art and exhibited for sale in the shop windows—much to the injury of the value of the originals. These copies are generally made by the assistance of engravings, though this is not always the case. For instance, we saw in a shop window, in Nassau street, the other day, a copy of Church's Falls of Tequendama, and in Broadway, one of Cropsey's Harvest Scene—miserable copies, it is true, and not very attractive, but sufficiently like to be recognized, and sicken one of the design. There is some value in selectness in a work of Art, and we would not care to possess a picture with which we became weary by seeing it in the windows every day in different forms. The artist cannot deposit a copy of his picture; and if he must have it engraved before he can secure the copyright, he has really no protection. It should be sufficient to prove that a picture is a copy to expose the seller to a fine.

An old and valued artist friend, who sends us his subscription, takes occasion to find fault with our name as too technical. Well, we have the consolation that some authorities in matters of taste have pronounced strongly in approval of it. As to its technicality, please recollect, good friend, that the Greek "techné" means "Art." As to the name CRAYON\* there are several good reasons for choosing it. It is almost a synonym of drawing, and is the basis of all representative Art, as form is the basis of all nature. The CRAYON is the instrument by which all essential ideas of Art are expressed. It goes still further, and gives the phenomena of light, which is the great animating spirit of Nature. It may be regarded then, as in a literal sense, including the bases of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture; and in a figurative sense, Poetry, which gives to the mind the same ultimate impressions by means of sense symbols, instead of form symbols. We have Art Journals, Journals of Art, Journals of Fine Arts, &c., in profusion. We wish a distinctive title, and we have it.

\* CRAYON, originally French, means any kind of pencil or drawing instrument, as distinguished from the brush.

THE most efficient step, we believe, toward encouraging Art, is to bring the artist and the amateur together in more familiar intercourse. This would soon be brought about, if it were generally known that artists' studios were accessible to the public, and particularly if artists were to appoint a time when they will be free to receive visitors. We shall have something to say hereafter of this, and at present shall only suggest that the artists inform the public of such times,—in which service we shall be happy to render the assistance of the columns of THE CRAYON.

We must take the earliest occasion to offer our humble and hearty protest against the stupid plans for an enlargement of our City Hall. The respectable City Father, who, in the debate on the plans, alluded to the Louvre as the City Hall of Paris, and insisted on it, because he had seen it a half-a-dozen times—"I've seen, and sure I ought to know"—is only a mild specimen of the architectural dullness of public officials on matters of Art. The design offered is one of the worst, so far as impressive display is concerned, that we ever remember to have seen. There is nothing broad or artistic about it. The idea of filling up any more space in the Park is in itself intolerable. The only rational plan, it seems to us, is to leave open all the space we have now, and erect all new buildings outside the Park, where the display will be effectual. Let the city buy the property on Chatham Street, opposite the Park, and build there—they will then add, indeed, to the effect of the *coup d'œil* of the neighborhood, *i. e.* if the buildings are fine, and if not, then their ugliness will be the more effectually shown up. The plan recently proposed, of giving up the lower end of the Park to the United States for a Post-Office is still worse. That a government having thirty or forty millions of dollars lying idle should receive as a gift a portion of the only breathing-place this part of the city possesses, is most unreasonable. If they want to build there, let them, as just recommended, take a location outside the Park, and thus add to the beauty of the city instead of taking from it. Architecture needs space to be seen from—if it has it not, we may as well build dry goods boxes, on a large scale, with plenty of windows, and let them suffice.

Why can we not have an intelligent Fine Art Commission to judge with regard to the plans for public buildings, painting of the Governors' portraits, and such things, which no Common Council, since Venice was a State, have been able to judge rightly with regard to. We have artists and architects, and men of taste enough in the city, who are capable of judging justly and impartially, with regard to such matters, and who would willingly act on an unpaid commission, if it were made entirely independent of politics. It is well worth trying, and we would like to be able to cherish a hope that New York will set an example to the American cities in this matter, by putting the Fine Art interests of the public into the hands of those who are by nature fitted to become guardians of them. It is idle to talk of the jealousy of artists and such stuff. Artists have never the meanness of jealousy which the friends of artists have, and they have at least a reverence for their Art which, in most cases, secures a candid judgment. A commission could be formed entirely of artists, which would be less actuated by professional and personal jealousy than one formed from men of any other class. The plan is well worth trying, and must by necessity succeed better than the arrangements by which we have succeeded in committing so many wretched mistakes in our civic Fine Arts.

We were much pleased to see at Church's studio, a few days since, a picture of Cole's which we had never before seen, a wild stormy composition, with a strong Poussin feeling of

tone and color, and differing very strongly from his later works. It is bold and energetic in its handling and conception. It is the property of Mrs. Cole, and is, we believe, for sale.

One comforting evidence of progress in public taste we find in the uniform of our city police. It is at once the most tasteful and fitting that we know of, and is a most agreeable contrast to the rigid, iron-looking English uniform, and equally removed from the warlike semi-military guise of the *gens-d'armes* of France. We are glad that the modern hat is disavowed by the authorities, and we only wish that in larger matters there had been at work the same common-sense perception of neatness which produced the police uniform.

#### THACKERAY AND RUSKIN ON TURNER.

WE publish, by way of curiosity, the criticisms of the two great critics of England upon Turner, in his last phase. They are interesting as relating to the same thing—the picture Ruskin treats of being one of those which Thackeray classes together so humorously. Our readers will, we are sure, excuse the quotation from so well known a work, as the *Modern Painters*, in consideration of having the two to compare. To our mind the truth lies with neither, but between the two:

"I must tell you, however, that Mr. Turner's performances are, for the most part, quite incomprehensible to me; and that his other pictures, which he is pleased to call 'Cicero at his Villa,' 'Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus,' 'Pluto carrying off Proserpina,' or what you will, are not a whit more natural, or less mad, than they used to be in former years, since he has forsaken nature, or attempted (like your French barbers) to embellish it. *On n'embellit pas la nature*, my dear Bricabrac; one may make pert caricatures of it, or mad exaggerations, like Mr. Turner in his fancy pieces. O ye gods! why will he not stick to copying her majestical countenance, instead of daubing it with some absurd antics and fard of her own? Fancy pea-green skies, crimson-lake trees, and orange and purple grass—fancy cata-racts, rainbows, suns, moons, and thunder-bolts—shake them well up, with a quantity of gambouge, and you will have an idea of a fancy picture, by Turner. It is worth a shilling alone to go and see 'Pluto and Proserpina.' Such a landscape! such figures! such a little, red-hot coal scuttle of a chariot!"

"As Nat Lee sings—

"'Methought I saw a hieroglyphic bat  
Skim o'er the surface of a slipshod hat;  
While, to increase the tumult of the skies,  
A damned potato o'er the whirlwind flies."

"If you can understand these lines, you can understand one of Turner's landscapes; and I recommend them to him, as a pretty subject for a piece for next year."—*Thackeray's Lecture on the Fine Arts.*—*Fraser, June, 1839.*

"But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the *Slave Ship*, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges, the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendor, which burns like gold and bathes like blood. Along this fiery

path and valley, the tossing waves, by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty ship, as it labors amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful line which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea. I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life; its color is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful; and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions (completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea."—*Ruskin.*—*Modern Painters.*

The Ames Manufacturing Company, Chicopee Massachusetts, have an advertisement in our columns, which deserves more than a simple glance. It marks an era in the History of Art in this country. They advertise that they will do what, until within a few years, we have been obliged to have done in Europe—cast any description of artistic bronzes from a statuette to the Colossus of Rhodes, if necessary, and will guarantee the quality of the work to be equal to that of the best European foundries. Castings in bronze for ornamental purposes, we believe, are made here, but we are not aware that there is any other foundry where large castings such as require artistic treatment can be made. Every step of progress made in this country towards emancipation from European dependency, in matters of Art, is one of the truest marks of advance our country can make. The Ames Manufacturing Company derive their advantages from Mr. H. K. Brown, the sculptor, whose time and money for years were spent in perfecting this description of casting. The advantages of his taste and experience joined to Yankee skill, have made this company safe in their promises. The Ames Manufacturing Company are about to cast, amongst other things, Brown's Washington, and R. S. Greenough's Franklin.

The National Academy of Design having sold their property on Broadway, are necessarily compelled to make other and temporary arrangements for their forthcoming Annual Exhibition, which will this season be displayed in the rooms lately occupied by the Dusseldorf Gallery. Arrangements it is hoped will soon be made to erect a suitable and permanent habitation for the Institution, which will render such arrangements unnecessary.